

حقوق رمضان

THE RIGHTS OF RAMADĀN

Transcript of a lecture delivered by:

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FOREWORD

Two volumes of *Ma'ārif Muṣliḥul Ummat* which is a collection of the lectures of Hadrat Muṣliḥul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Waṣīyyullāh Ṣāhib *rahimahullāh* have already been published. By the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā*, the third volume will be published soon.

This volume contains many useful and rare topics. One of them is titled *Huqūq-e-Ramaḍān*. When I read through it, I found that Hadrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained the reality and rights of Ramaḍān in a most scholarly and academic manner. I found the entire article extremely beneficial and impressive. May Allāh *ta'ālā* confer the best of rewards to Hadrat Wālā *rahimahullāh*. The actual compiler of these articles is Maulānā 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Ṣāhib Jāmī *rahimahullāh*. He compiled and arranged most useful topics, and in this way opened a huge door for forthcoming generations to benefit from them. May Allāh *ta'ālā* reward him with the best of rewards.

Bearing in mind the excellence and impressive effect of the article *Huqūq-e-Ramaḍān*, I felt it should be published separately so that more people may benefit from it. The month of Ramaḍān also arrived, so I experienced a stronger urge to publish it. Around the same time, Maulānā Zayn al-Islām Qāsmī, a muftī at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, had come to the khānqāh in Allāhābād. I mentioned it to him, he read the article, and expressed the deep impact it had on him, and repeatedly spoke of its usefulness. He further agreed that it should be published.

The article was then read in the after-tarāwīḥ assembly. Those who were present were overtaken by the lofty themes which it contained. The cry from their

hearts was heard that it should be published as quickly as possible so that their fellow brethren could receive it in this very month of Ramaḍān and they may, in line with this article, value the month of Ramaḍān.

Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
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THE RIGHTS OF RAMADĀN

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ! فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
الرَّجِيمِ، بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

O believers! Fasting has been made obligatory on you as it was made obligatory on those before you, so that you may become pious (through the blessing of fasting).¹

We learn from this verse that the acquisition of piety is the real objective for the obligation of fasting. In other words, man's passion is broken down and his carnal self which constantly prompts him towards evil (*nafs-e-ammārah*) is transformed to one which experiences tranquillity with Allāh *ta'ālā* (*nafs-e-muṭma'innah*). Furthermore, it develops good capabilities and praiseworthy qualities. This is the fundamental objective behind the obligation of fasting. By fasting, the person becomes habituated to restraining his carnal self from its various demands; and the firmness of this habit is the foundation of taqwā.

If these things are not acquired from fasting, and a person restricts himself to hunger and thirst, and his fasting is only in name, then he will acquire nothing from it. A fast of this nature has no value and rank in the sight of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Even if a jurist or mufti

¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 183.

issues a verdict of validity for such a fast, and says that it is valid in the light of the Sharī'at, this fast is not acceptable in the sight of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. This is because Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* did not prescribe such a fast in the first place which does not result in taqwā. I would like to expound on this theme to you. Listen attentively.

Fasting has an external dimension and an internal one. The external fast comprises of abstaining from food and drink. However, you can understand for yourself that fasting cannot be just this because abstaining from food and drink is not praiseworthy in itself for man because he can do this even when he becomes angry. That is, sometimes he gives up food and drink out of anger. Thus, the objective of fasting, and the fruit of abstaining from food and drink is that man abstains from the prohibitions of the Sharī'at and does not commit anything that is unlawful. For example, abstaining from speaking lies, backbiting, etc. this is in fact what taqwā entails. This is the reality of fasting and its internal dimension. And this is the fundamental objective behind the promulgation of fasting. The following words of the Qur'ān are clear proofs in this regard:

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

...so that you may become pious.

Allāh *ta'ālā* says with reference to qurbānī:

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَى مِنْكُمْ

*Neither their meat nor their blood reaches Allāh. Rather, it is the piety of your hearts that reaches Him.*¹

Just as Allāh *ta'ālā* said with regard to qurbānī, the same can be understood with regard to fasting. That is, Allāh *ta'ālā* made fasting obligatory so that man's desires may be broken, the heat of his carnal self may be extinguished, his *nafs-e-ammārah* may be converted into *nafs-e-muṭma'innah*, and man may acquire rectitude and piety within him. However, if this benefit has not been realized, then he has acquired nothing but hunger and thirst. And since this hunger and thirst is against the actual intention of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, you yourself are responsible for the surprise which you are experiencing. Had you carried out the order of the Sharī'at while observing its limits and prerequisites, you would have certainly enjoyed its fruits.

I constantly say to you – and this is my complaint to you – that the general condition today is that even the actions which people do, they do not fulfil the reality, the etiquette and prerequisites of those actions. What, then, can be said of the actions which they do not carry out? They will carry out an action, bear difficulties in carrying it out, and then feel that they are absolved of their responsibility. However, on the day of Resurrection they will realize that it was not accepted in Allāh's court, and that whatever hardships they had borne for it went to waste.

Fasting is one of those actions. Those who do not fast in the first place do it because they – due to their carnal self and ignorance - have no knowledge of its

¹ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22: 37.

importance and virtue. As for those who fast, there are many among them regarding whom Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كم من صائم ليس له من صيامه إلا الظم، وكم من قائم ليس له في قيامه إلا السهر.¹

Many a fasting person gains nothing from his fast except thirst. Many a person engaged in night worship gains nothing from it except sleeplessness.

This too is a terrible situation and a major loss. It is essential for us to save ourselves from it.

I will now explain this Hadīth in the light of another Hadīth. A Hadīth in *Mishkāt Sharīf* states:

من لم يدع قول الزور والعمل به فليس لله حاجة في أن يدع طعامه وشرابه.²

A person who does not give up lies and acting upon them while in a state of fasting, then Allāh ta'ālā has no need for him to abstain from food and drink.

This is because Allāh ta'ālā is free from the need for food and drink. If the person abstains from both, the benefit of his abstention is not going to reach Allāh ta'ālā in any way. In no way will Allāh's need be fulfilled thereby causing Him to become pleased with the person. Instead, Allāh ta'ālā looks at the condition of the heart and piety; this is what He focuses on. If these are not found in the fast, of what benefit was it?

¹ رواه الدارمي. مشكوة شريف: ج ١، ص ١٧٧.

² مشكوة شريف: ج ١، ص ١٧٦.

In his commentary to this Hadīth, the author of *Mirqāt* says that *qaul az-zūr* means *qaul al-bātil*. In other words, to utter something which entails a sin irrespective of whether it is speaking a lie, the utterance of unbelief, a false testimony, a fabrication, a slander, backbiting, a baseless complaint, accusing someone of adultery, being vulgar and abusive, and cursing and mocking. All these are included in *qaul az-zūr*. As for “acting upon them”, this refers to immoral acts. They are referred to as *zūr* because they entail sin just as *zūr* is found in speaking lies.

I say that although *zūr* is essentially an adjective of *qaul* (word), bearing in mind that it is also an injurious action of the tongue, the words “and acting on them” have been added as a further elucidation. Thus, *qaul az-zūr* and *wa al-‘amal bihi* are one and the same thing.

The present Hadīth only mentions *qaul az-zūr*. Another Hadīth lists five things which break the fast and *wudū’*. They are: speaking lies, backbiting, carrying tales, casting evil glances, taking false oaths.¹

From the above mentioned sins, some of them are serious and severe. For example, backbiting especially while one is fasting. A Hadīth states that a person who engages in backbiting in the course of the day has in fact broken his fast. Another Hadīth is quoted in the marginal notes of *al-Hidāyah*:

Hadrat ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* passed by two persons. One of them was cupping the other. In the course of the cupping, one was backbiting about someone and the second person did

¹ *Al-Jāmi’ as-Saghīr*, p. 314.

not stop or reprimand him. On seeing this, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

أفطر الحاجم والمحجوم

The cupper and the one who is being cupped have both broken their fast.

Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd radiyallāhu 'anhu, the narrator of this Hadīth, says that when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said that they have broken their fast, it was not because of the act of cupping, but because of backbiting and listening to it.

Look at the repugnance of backbiting and listening to backbiting as gauged from this Hadīth. The fast broke on account of it. Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd radiyallāhu 'anhu must have heard it from Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam because he cannot issue a ruling on the basis of his own opinion.

This is supported by another narration related by Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās radiyallāhu 'anhu. Two fasting people performed the zuhr or 'asr salāh. When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam completed his salāh, he turned to them and said: "Repeat your wuḍū' and salāh, but complete your fast." (In other words, do not eat or drink anything until sunset). "However, you must keep qadā' of this fast tomorrow." (In other words, this fast of yours has been invalidated. It is obligatory on you to keep qadā' of it). The two said: "O Rasūlullāh! What is the reason for this?" Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam replied:

¹ كشف الخفاء ومزيل الإلباس، ج ١، ص ١٤١.

“Because you were backbiting such and such person.”¹

Some commentators of this Hadīth write: Although the ‘ulamā’ say that this incident was as a way of castigating and reprimanding them, i.e. their fast according to the Shari‘at has not been invalidated, they concur that backbiting reduces the reward of the wudū’ and ṣalāh. Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh*, acting on the apparent and outward meaning of this Hadīth, says that backbiting is actually an invalidator of a fast.

No matter what, the point which is clear from the above Aḥādīth is that there is a distinct contradiction between fasting and these sins. In other words, these sins cannot be combined with fasting. This is especially so with regard to backbiting – its repugnance and abhorrence is very clear.

The author of *Mirqāt* explains the reason for the non-acceptance of this man’s fast. He says that eating is in itself permissible. The man abstained from eating, but committed an act which is intrinsically unlawful, and is not permissible under any circumstance. This is why the person became eligible for Allāh’s wrath, and his act of obedience [the fast] is more worthy of being flung back on his face. Allāh *ta’ālā* has no regard whatsoever for the fast of such a person, and He does not look at him with affection.

This is why I say that it is easy to give up food and drink. However, when a person keeps a fast which is devoid of lies, backbiting, futile conversations, immoral and shameless discussions, he will find it

¹مشكوة، باب حفظ اللسان، ج ٢.

difficult. There are many who are bearing the hardships of fasting, and becoming thin due to fasting for an entire month. However, because their fast is coupled with backbiting, complaining, speaking lies, and various other futile conversations and discussions, they are not acquiring the objective of the fast which is piety. How can they then be rewarded for such a fast in the Hereafter!? It is so unfortunate that they deprived themselves of eating, and did not even get the reward for it. Can there be a worse loss than this!? People like this have lost in this world and in the Hereafter.

To sum up, the acceptance of a fast in Allāh's court is dependent on giving up sins. We learn from this that fasting enjoys a special status in the Sharī'at. It is an important obligation and a salient feature of Islam. This is why more importance is given to it. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam used to give immense importance to the month of Ramaḍān and used to wait the entire year for the arrival of this month. With the arrival of this month, he used to direct the attention of the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum to the virtues of this month. Many great virtues with regard to the month of Ramaḍān have been explained by Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu 'anhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam delivered a sermon on the last Friday of Sha'bān. He said: "O people! A great and blessed month has dawned upon you (i.e. Ramaḍān). It is a month in which there is a night which is superior to a thousand months. Allāh made fasting during the day compulsory and night worship (tarāwīḥ) less than compulsory (Sunnat). Anyone who does an optional act in this month shall receive the reward of a compulsory act done in other

months. Anyone who carries out a compulsory act in this month shall receive the reward of 70 compulsory acts done in other months. It is the month of patience, and the reward for patience is Paradise. And it is a month of generosity. It is a month in which a believer's sustenance is increased. The one who provides food to a fasting person (to open his fast), it will be a means for the pardoning of his sins and emancipation from the Hell-fire. And he will receive the same reward as the fasting person without his reward decreasing in any way." Someone said: "O Rasūlullāh! Everyone does not have so much to give whereby a fasting person can open his fast." (This person assumed that the fasting person must be given enough food with which he can eat to his fill). Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "Allāh shall reward the person even if he gives him just one dry date, enough water to quench his thirst, or milk to which water has been added. The person who provides a full meal to a fasting person will be provided with special water from my pond after which he will not feel thirsty until he enters Paradise." He added in the same sermon: "It is a month where the first part of it is a mercy, the middle part is a means of forgiveness, and the last part is a means of emancipation from the Hell-fire. The person who lessens the burden on his slave in this month, Allāh *ta'ālā* will pardon him and give him salvation from the Hell-fire."¹

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu 'anhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "Allāh *ta'ālā* pardons the fasting people of my ummat on the last night." He was asked: "O Rasūlullāh! Is that night the night of power (laylatul qadr)?" He replied: "No.

¹مشكوة، كتاب الصوم.

The fact of the matter is that every labourer has to be paid his wage on the completion of his labour.”¹

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said: Paradise is adorned from the beginning of the year for the month of Ramaḍān. When it is the first day of Ramaḍān, a breeze blows from beneath the ‘Arsh (the grand throne of Allāh). It blows over the leaves of Paradise and passes through the doe-eyed damsels of Paradise. They say: “O our Sustainer! Appoint husbands for us from among Your servants through whom our eyes will take delight, and their eyes will take delight from us.”

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said: “There are eight entrances to Paradise, one of which is called Bāb ar-Rayyān. This entrance is reserved for the fasting persons. No one else can enter through it.”

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurayrah *radīyallāhu ‘anhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said: “The person who keeps fast in the month of Ramaḍān with īmān and the hope of receiving rewards, shall have his past sins pardoned. The person who spends the night in worship in the month of Ramaḍān with īmān and the hope of receiving rewards shall have his past sins pardoned.”²

Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr *radīyallāhu ‘anhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said: “The fast and the Qur’ān will both intercede on behalf of a person on the day of Resurrection. The fast will say: “O my Sustainer! I kept him away from food and drink during the day, so accept my intercession in his

¹مشكوة، كتاب الصوم.

²مشكوة، كتاب الصوم.

favour.” The Qur’ān will say: “O my Sustainer! I kept him away from having a full night’s sleep, so accept my intercession in his favour.” Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said: “The intercession of both will be accepted.”¹

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said: “The rewards for the good actions of a believer are multiplied by ten going up to 700. Allāh *ta’ālā* said: The reward for fasting is excluded from this because fasting is for Me and I will personally reward the person for it. This is because a servant gives up his desires, food and drink solely for My sake.”²

From the above narrations we can gauge how great a worship fasting is. I say that the greatest act of worship is *ṣalāh*, but it too comes to an end with having to relieve one’s self, sleep, etc. On the other hand, fasting is a worship which remains intact whether you are awake or sleeping. If you go to relieve yourself, you are still fasting. In short, in no condition does it separate itself from you. This is a special feature of fasting which is not found in other acts of worship. Another major peculiarity of this worship which you must have observed from the above narrations is that Allāh *ta’ālā* excluded its reward by saying:

إلا الصوم فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به

Except for fasting. It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

¹مشكوة، كتاب الصوم.

²مشكوة، كتاب الصوم.

In other words, the rewards for other acts of worship are conveyed via the angels, while Allāh *ta'ālā* will give the rewards for fasting Himself.

Qāḍī Thanā'ullāh Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* explains this Hadīth by saying: The reward for fasting is that the person will behold Me in the Hereafter, while in this world he will be blessed with My *ma'rifat* (true recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā*).

He writes further:

A narration of Bayhaqī *rahimahullāh* states that someone asked Hadrat Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah *rahimahullāh* the meaning of this Hadīth-e-Qudsī. He said: This is a most authentic Hadīth. It means that when judgement will be passed on the mutual rights of people on the day of Resurrection, and a person has certain rights which he owes to people, then his good actions will be given to them to the extent that he is left with no good actions. However, when it comes to fasting, Allāh *ta'ālā* will not give the person's fasts as payment for the rights which he owes. Allāh *ta'ālā* will say: "Leave the fasts aside, because he kept them solely for Me." Allāh *ta'ālā* will then fulfil the fasting person's remaining dues, and give rewards to those whom he is owing those dues until they too are happy. Thus we see that a fast remains with a fasting person until it draws him to Paradise.¹

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful Hadīth which displays the immense kindness and mercy of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Look at how valued this act of worship – fasting – is in Allāh's court and how much He loves it that He separates it from the other actions of His servant and

¹ *Fath al-Qadīr*.

expresses His appreciation of it by saying: “It is solely for Me, and I will personally reward him for it.”

You can well imagine what the Ahlullāh must be experiencing when they hear these glad tidings. They say on such an occasion:

If I were to give my life on hearing this glad tiding, it will be worth it.

If you do not know this Hadīth, how will you value your fast? This is why I say that there is a need for knowledge before action. One’s beliefs are put right through knowledge, and a yearning for action is created. A person learns the greatness and rank of a thing. This is how the ‘ulamā’ and reformers of every era undertook the reformation and rectification of the ummat. They would first convey correct knowledge to them, and through it they would urge them towards actions. The Sharī‘at belongs to Allāh *ta‘ālā* and He Himself placed beauty and attraction in it. Therefore, if an ‘ālim merely conveys the words of Allāh *ta‘ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* in a simple and easy manner to the people, they will develop a love for the Sharī‘at. There were Allāh-fearing ‘ulamā’ of the past who delivered such lectures that in a single assembly, countless non-Muslims repented and became Muslims.

No matter what, after hearing the virtues of fasting as explained by Allāh *ta‘ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, there should be no one who does not bear the difficulty of fasting happily and does not seek its rewards.

Another reason for the uniqueness and importance of fasting is that it has a certain level of similarity with Allāh *ta‘ālā*. In other words, everything has to be given up. A fasting person neither eats, drinks nor engages

in intercourse. In this way, he bears a certain amount of similarity with Allāh *ta'ālā* because He is totally pure from such things.

A fasting person is also similar to angels. He therefore acquires a type of sanctity and his soul is purified. However, this will only be when you, together with abstaining from food and drink, give up sins. This is because just as the angels do not eat and drink, they do not commit sins. Allāh *ta'ālā* says with reference to the angels:

لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

*They do not disobey Allāh in whatever He commands them. They only do what they have been commanded.*¹

Thus, if together with abstaining from food and drink, you abstain from sins, you will bear total similarity with the angels. This is the essence of piety which is the fundamental objective of the obligation of fasting. And this is the reason why Allāh *ta'ālā* made fasting a prelude to another most important act of worship, viz. hajj. The months of hajj have been delineated after the month of Ramaḍān so that man may purify his carnal self, develop rectitude and piety, and create within him the eligibility to present himself before the divine court of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Thus, Ramaḍān is like a month of striving, and the months which follow are the months of observing [Allāh's might, power and beauty].

If a person keeps fast as he ought to, his carnal self becomes completely pure. This means that he must not suffice with abstaining from food and drink.

¹ Sūrah at-Taḥrīm, 66: 6.

Rather, he must safeguard his tongue as well. He must abstain from backbiting, speaking lies, and wasting his time in futile conversations. This is the fast of the tongue. The worship of the ears entails abstaining from listening to backbiting and other futile and useless discussions. The worship of the eyes is that they must not be used to look at impermissible things.

If a person bears all these points in mind, it will be an indication that piety is found in his heart and that he is acquiring the objective of fasting. As for abstaining from the outward sins, this is the first step towards piety. Other levels come after it, viz. he must bear similarity with the angels. He must develop angelic qualities in the sense that he neither eats nor drinks, and remains in the constant remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā*. This is obviously a major level. Another level above it is when a person imbibes the qualities of Allāh *ta'ālā* because abstaining from food and drink is from among the qualities of Allāh *ta'ālā*. A person has these qualities when he is fasting.

Anyway, these are very high stations; leave them for the seniors. If you do just this much, it will be a great achievement. That is, save yourself from acts of disobedience and do not commit sins. This is why I consider it a boon for those who remain sleeping while they are fasting. I think to myself, although they are not carrying out any external acts of obedience, they are at least saved from backbiting and other sins. Although they will receive fewer rewards, their fast will not be unacceptable.

The reason for saying this is that I have personally seen people who are fasting, yet they are occupied in backbiting for several hours at a time. To make matters worse, they do not even consider this to be a

sin. In fact, they go to the extent of saying: “Brother! If we do not do this, how will the time of the fast pass?” To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Listen! The Ahlullāh passed the time of the fast in the recitation of the Qur’ān, the remembrance of Allāh *ta’ālā* and in *du’ā’*. Unfortunately, all these actions do not appeal to you, so you pass your time backbiting and eating the flesh of your fellow brothers. The Qur’ān likens backbiting to eating the flesh of your own brother:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ، وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بََعْضُكُم بَعْضًا، أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ.

*O believers! Abstain from much suspicion. Surely some suspicions amount to sin. Neither spy on one another nor backbite one another. Would any one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother who is dead? You abhor it.*¹

It is stated in a Hadīth that when a certain person came to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, he said to the man: “You engaged in backbiting. Consequently I am getting the smell of raw meat emanating from your mouth.”

We have seen many people playing cards while fasting. When they are asked about it, they reply: “We are merely passing our time.” Obviously when you become distant from Dīn and thereby put an end to your affinity with Allāh’s remembrance, recitation of the Qur’ān, etc. then you will spend your fasting day in playing cards and other futile activities. If you give up

¹ Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 12.

good actions, they will be replaced by evil activities. If you cast aside the Sunnat, it will certainly be replaced by bid'at (innovations). This is how these people spend their time: Some of it is spent sleeping, some in backbiting and complaining, and the time after 'aṣr is spent in preparing exotic dishes for ifṭār (opening the fast).

I say, it is certainly permissible to make preparations for ifṭār, and if it is done with a good intention then it will also earn you rewards. When a fasting person places his food for ifṭār and sits down in front of it, waiting for the adhān to be called, then Allāh *ta'ālā* becomes extremely happy. This is because the person has the desire to eat and drink, the foods are present right in front of him, but he is waiting for Allāh's permission; he is not consuming the food. This demonstrates his total submission and servitude. This is why this action elicits rewards. But for whom? For the person who fulfilled the rights of the fast. That is, all his body parts joined him in the fast. His eyes, tongue, ears, legs, heart and mind all observed the fast. If he abstained from food and drink solely for Allāh's sake, then the time of ifṭār is undoubtedly a time of extreme joy and happiness for him.

A Hadīth states:

لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ، فَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ وَفَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ.

A fasting person has two occasions of joy: When he opens his fast and when he will meet Allāh ta'ālā.

As for the person who already opened his fast with backbiting, lying, carrying tales, casting evil glances or

¹ سنن الترمذي، ص ١٩٣.

false oaths before sunset; how can this time of opening the fast be an occasion of joy for him? After all, he has accumulated a large heap of sins on himself. First of all, he opened his fast before the appointed time. Then, when he did open his fast, he did it with something which is ḥarām and unlawful, i.e. with backbiting, carrying tales and so on. He has actually added fuel to the fire. Thirdly, he is even happy over these sins and is under the assumption that his fast is valid and accepted. Whereas, he ought to have cried over his actions, repented, and sought forgiveness. Instead, he is rejoicing over these sins.

On the other hand, the fast of a true and pious believer is such that in addition to saving himself from sins, he keeps away from futile activities. Thus, when he opens his fast, he expresses his thanks to Allāh *ta'ālā* for having enabled him to pass his day in His obedience. His joy at the time of iftār is not over the iftār itself, but over the fact that the fast which is an obligation to Allāh *ta'ālā* has been fulfilled in the proper manner. That is, he abstained from sinning throughout the day. His joy at this time is actually an īmānī joy – a joy based on full faith and confidence in Allāh *ta'ālā*. After exercising patience of the entire day's tiredness, when he sees the various types of delicacies and bounties of Allāh *ta'ālā* placed before him, and receives the permission to consume them, then he – so to speak – says:

All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā* that we
have not died. We have reached our friend.
Thousands of praises over this courage of
ours.

The reason why we do not value ṣalāh, fasting, etc. is that we are ignorant of the Shari'at. The virtues of these actions are found in the Qur'ān and Hadīth, but

we do not speak about them. Now if we do not speak about them, how will the masses come to know of them? And when there is no knowledge of a thing, how can someone practise on it? And if there is no practice, how can the blessings of those good actions be acquired?

Our pious predecessors were not like this. The pious elders and saints used to value the month of Ramadān. They used to pay particular attention to acts of obedience in this month. This is because when a person sets himself correctly in this month and does good actions in it, he is able to remain like that for the rest of the year.

Before giving the Taurāh to Hadrat Mūsā ‘alayhis salām, Allāh ta‘ālā instructed him to keep fast for one month. This was then increased by another ten days. Consequently, it totalled a fast of 40 days, although the initial order was for 30 days. When he completed this entire number, Allāh ta‘ālā gave him His Book, the Taurāh.

If you also keep fast as required by Allāh ta‘ālā and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam, you will realize and notice that you have indeed received something. The saints used to pay particular attention to these days. They must have gained something for them to have paid so much of attention to them! If this act of worship – fasting – did not have a special status, Allāh ta‘ālā would not have said:

إلا الصوم فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به

Except for fasting. It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

Or as per another narration: “I Myself become the reward for the fasting person.”

The elders quote the following Hadīth-e-Qudsī in their writings:

مَنْ قَتَلْتُهُ فَأَنَا دِيَّتُهُ

When I kill someone, I Myself become his ransom.

Here the word “kill” refers to killing with love. In other words, the person who obliterates himself in Allāh’s love will become connected to Allāh *ta’ālā* and remain connected to Him. When a fasting person gives up food, drink and all desires solely for Allāh *ta’ālā*, and obliterates his carnal self, then this too is like a killing. Thus, the objective of both Ahādīth is the same, and the words *أَنَا أُجْزِي بِهِ* are synonymous to *أَنَا دِيَّتُهُ* – I am his ransom.

The same Hadīth contains these words:

يَدَعُ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِيْ

He gives up his food and drink for My sake.

In other words: Fasting is solely for Me and I become his reward. The reason for this is that this poor fellow left his food, drink and desires for My sake.

Did you see the level of appreciation of Allāh *ta’ālā* for your fast! This shows that your abstaining from food and drink is valued and appreciated in His court provided it is done with sincerity. As for the Hadīth in which Allāh *ta’ālā* says that He has no regard for his abstaining from food and drink, this is when the fasting person did not fulfil the requirements and prerequisites of the fast, and did not observe the fast

¹ الجامع الصغير، ص ٣١٤.

as per the demands of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. Apart from this, fasting is a most valuable act of worship in the sight of Allāh *ta'ālā*. A Hadīth states in this regard:

لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ، فَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ وَفَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ¹.

A fasting person has two occasions of joy: When he opens his fast and he will meet Allāh ta'ālā.

He will receive the reward for his fasting directly from Allāh *ta'ālā*. This too is a part of a Hadīth-e-Qudsī. Although Allāh *ta'ālā* is explaining the joy which will be experienced by the fasting person, we learn from it that not only the fasting person but even Allāh *ta'ālā* is happy over the fact that His servant gave up his food, drink and desires solely for Allāh's pleasure. Now what can be greater than this?

Listen further:

A Hadīth-e-Qudsī states with reference to *iftār*:

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَحَبُّ عِبَادِي إِلَيَّ أَعْجَلُهُ فِطْرًا².

Allāh ta'ālā said: The most beloved of My servants in My sight is the one who hastens in opening the fast.

Another Hadīth states:

لَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا عَجَّلُوا الْفِطْرَ³.

¹ سنن الترمذي، ص ١٩٣.

² سنن الترمذي، ص ١٧٨.

³ صحيح البخاري، ص ٣١٥.

People will continue experiencing goodness as long as they hasten in opening the fast.

In other words, when they remain steadfast on this Sunnat, they will be safe from evil and corruption.

Taurbashtī *rahimahullāh* said that the reason for this is that it entails acting against the People of the Book because they wait for the stars to spread out before opening their fast.

Subsequently, this has become the practice of the bid'atīs of our community. The reason why it is superior and more beloved to hasten in opening the fast is that it is an expression of one's servitude and submission, and this is most suited to servitude. Furthermore, it is a demonstration of a person hastening towards the permission [to eat and drink] given by Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Taurbashtī *rahimahullāh* says further: In it is proof that the straight path entails following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* strictly. The person who deviates from this is as though he has chosen crookedness and misguidance, even though it is in an act of worship.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* also said:

تَسَحَّرُوا فَإِنَّ فِي السَّحُورِ بَرَكَهًۢا

Partake of the sehri because there is blessing in it.

The 'ulamā' say that the blessing refers to the acquisition of strength to keep the fast for the day. Another narration states:

¹ سنن الترمذي، ص ١٧٩.

اسْتَعِينُوا بِمُقَايَلَةِ النَّهَارِ عَلَى قِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ وَبِأَكْلِ السَّحُورِ عَلَى صِيَامِ النَّهَارِ

Take help from the siesta to spend the night in worship, and from eating at sehri time to keep fast during the day.

Another meaning of the “blessing” mentioned in the previous Hadīth is that it refers to additional rewards because the person has adopted the way of the Messengers ‘*alayhimus salām*.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said that the difference between our fast and that of the People of the Book is the partaking of sehri.

The author of *Mirqāt* quotes the following Hadīth:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ إِذَا أَفْطَرَ قَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ صُئْتُ وَعَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ.

*When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* used to open his fast, he used to say: O Allāh! For You have I fasted and with Your sustenance do I open my fast.*

The author then writes:

إِنَّ لِلصَّائِمِ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ دَعْوَةً لَا تُرَدُّ.

At the time of opening the fast, the fasting person has a du‘ā’ which is not rejected.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* used to make the following du‘ā’ at the time of ifṭār:

¹مشكوة: ١٧٥.

²ابن ماجه: ١٧٥٣.

يَا وَاسِعَ الْفَضْلِ اغْفِرْ لِي

O the One who possesses immense grace. Forgive me.

He would also say the following:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَعَانَنِي فَصُمْتُ، وَرَزَقَنِي فَأَفْطَرْتُ.

All praise is due to Allāh who helped me, so I could keep my fast; and gave me sustenance so I could open my fast.

These are the supplications which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam made; and you probably never heard them before. You should therefore practise on this Sunnat. Ensure that you make a du'a' at the time of iftār because as per the statement of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, it is not rejected. The reason for this is that the person kept fast. When his fast is accepted, then the reward for it is that his du'a' is accepted. And we already quoted the Hadīth with regard to the reward for fasting:

إِلَّا الصَّوْمَ فَإِنَّهُ لِي وَأَنَا أَجْزِي بِهِ

Except for fasting. It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

First of all du'a' is an act of worship in itself. Then you included it in an act of worship [fasting] which is accepted. Since the fast ends at the time of iftār, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam made du'a' at that time. This is so that when this good action [fasting] goes up, the du'a' will go up with it.

Bearing in mind that the Prophets 'alayhimus salām have truly recognized Allāh ta'ālā, they are fully aware of His rank and His doings. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam made this du'a' at the end of the

fast because this worship [the fast] is accepted by Allāh *ta'ālā*. He therefore presented his need [du'ā'] with the act [fasting] which is beloved by Allāh *ta'ālā*. After all, Allāh *ta'ālā* is most generous and affectionate. He will not accept the fast which is for Him while reject the du'ā' which is for His servant. The du'ā' is therefore accepted with the fast. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* made du'ā' at this time and taught his followers how to ask of the Most Generous Allāh. When a person asks in the correct manner, he succeeds in his quest.

It is for this reason I say you must acquire knowledge of the Sunnat because action without knowledge is not possible. And without knowing the Sunnat, it will be very difficult to tread the path of the Sunnat. Even after bearing many hardships and difficulties, you remain where you are because the path of Allāh *ta'ālā* is confined to the path of the Sunnat. Without it, you will not reach Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Hadrat 'Irbād ibn Sāriyah *radiyallāhu 'anhu* narrates: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* called me to partake of the sehrī in the month of Ramaḍān by saying:

هَلُمَّ إِلَى الْغِذَاءِ الْمُبَارَكِ

Come and partake of this blessed food.

Look! Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is calling it a blessed food. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* wants to feed him, yet there are so many among us who do not partake of sehrī and say: "We just have a sip of water. It is enough for us." This is not what Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* wanted of us. In fact, he refers to it as the way of the Jews – that they keep fast but they do not partake of

sehrī. Partaking of sehrī gives strength to the fasting person. This is such a blessed meal that even if you eat a bit extra, the Sharī'at will not take you to task for it. Just as abstaining from food and drink while fasting during the day is a source of rewards, in the same way partaking of sehrī at night [latter part of the night] is a source of rewards.

We learn from this that the fundamental source of reward is obedience to Allāh's orders. When He prohibits us, it will be harām to eat food. When He orders us, then eating will earn us rewards.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how much ease there is in the Sharī'at. We are made to eat and drink, and we are conveyed to Allāh *ta'ālā*. In other words, the Sharī'at did not ask us to give up an essential thing.

There was a person from our area who used to say: "A certain shaykh provides us with food and drink, and conveys us to Allāh *ta'ālā*." When I heard this, I said: "It is possible that he may be conveying you to Allāh *ta'ālā*. However, as for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, I can say with certainty that he fed people and conveyed them to Allāh *ta'ālā*."

Allāh *ta'ālā* made fasting compulsory, so Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* asked us to hasten in opening the fast and made it a Sunnat to partake of sehrī. In fact, he is calling that Sahābī (Hadrat 'Irbād ibn Sāriyah *radiyallāhu 'anhu*) to join him in the sehrī and is referring to it as a blessed food.

There is no act of worship which is as long as fasting. If a person's intention is correct and he abstains from sinning, and fulfils it as ordered by Allāh *ta'ālā*, then just that one month of Ramaḍān will convey him to Allāh *ta'ālā* and this will be more than enough for him.

However, it is very difficult to keep the fast as it ought to be kept. It is very hard for a person to keep himself safeguarded against all types of sins for the entire day – sins of the eyes, ears, hands, tongue and other body parts. There is no act of worship where a person commits a sin while performing that worship, and it still remains correct and valid. Fasting is a worship which extends for the entire day. It is therefore very difficult for a person to keep all his body parts away from sin for such a long period.

This is why immense rewards have been set aside for the real and genuine fast. But this fast is not easy. It is easy to give up food and drink, but to do this as ordered by Allāh *ta'ālā*, this is very difficult; whereas this alone is the accepted fast. If the fast is not as ordered by Allāh *ta'ālā*, and a person also engages in backbiting and other sins, Allāh *ta'ālā* will not look at such a person with mercy. This is because the thing which was ḥarām for the entire year, he did not give that up. And the thing [food] which was ḥalāl throughout the year except for the days of fasting, he gave that up. After all, sins are ḥarām at all times; and they will be even more ḥarām while in a state of fasting.

It is most appalling to commit sins during these days. First of all because it is the month of Ramaḍān. Secondly because you are in a state of fasting. Yet you are backbiting!? I already explained this to you previously:

أَفْطَرَ مَنْ ظَلَّ يَأْكُلُ مِنْ لُحُومِ النَّاسِ

The one who spends the day backbiting people has broken his fast.

Similarly, a Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

أفطر الحاجم والمحجوم¹

The cupper and the one who is being cupped have both broken their fast.

Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd radiyallāhu 'anhu who is the narrator of this Hadīth said:

لا للحجامة ولكن للغيبة

The fast did not break on account of cupping, but because they were engaged in backbiting.

Had it been us, we would not have explained all these points to you. But these are the words of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. He is explaining to you that the objective of the Shari'at is not to merely give up food and drink. Rather, the objective is to acquire taqwā through fasting. Now you yourself can check how much of taqwā you have acquired.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam certainly got hold of the real thief when he said: "When a person does not give up lies and acting upon them while in a state of fasting, the fast will not reach Allāh *ta'ālā*." If it is not accepted in Allāh's court, it will not be accepted in the court of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.

The joy which a fasting person experiences at the time of opening his fast, as mentioned in the Hadīth, is for that person who kept the fast as it ought to be kept. This is because the joy which he is referring to at the

¹مشكوة، ج ١، ص ١٧٧.

time of iftār is actually a conglomeration of two joys. One is a physical joy which is experienced at being able to eat and drink. Thus, when you partake of the meal at iftār, see how much you relish it. You can understand this by eating the same foods out of Ramaḍān. You will not experience the same enjoyment as you did when you ate them at the time of opening your fast. So this is the physical joy. The other joy at the time of iftār is the spiritual joy which is experienced by a believer. He experiences joy over the fact that he was able to carry out an order of Allāh ta'ālā. He – so to speak – says:

All praise is due to Allāh ta'ālā that we
have not died. We have reached our friend.
Thousands of praises over this courage of
ours.

When a pious believer completes his fast and saves himself from sins, he experiences a special joy in īmān. He thinks to himself: I had to endure the pain of hunger, thirst and acting against my desires in this world; but I carried out Allāh's order as instructed by Him. I thus made my fast eligible for:

فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به¹

It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

Obviously this is no small joy. When a servant of Allāh ta'ālā performs ṣalāh, keeps fast, or carries out any other order of Allāh ta'ālā in the prescribed manner, then there can be no greater happiness than it. He experiences such spiritual joy that all physical joys are nothing compared to it.

¹مشكوة: ج ١، ص ١٧٣.

No matter what, to keep a fast and to keep it in the correct manner is not any less of a joy. Yes, it is certainly difficult. When a servant's action is accepted on account of his sincerity, then everything else is accepted. And when something is accepted, Allāh *ta'ālā* is most appreciative of it.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was leading the people in *ṣalāh*. A *Ṣahābī* uttered something from the back. After the *ṣalāh*, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* asked: "Who spoke?" All the *Ṣahābah raḍiyallāhu 'anhum* remained silent, and the one who uttered something also got scared. But because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* asked, he said: "I was the one." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "Your words were so beloved by Allāh *ta'ālā* that 12 angels were fighting against each other to take those words up to the heavens."

Similarly, when a person's fast is accepted in Allāh's court, then whatever results from it is also beloved by Allāh *ta'ālā*. You just heard how Allāh *ta'ālā* loves the fasting person's abstention from food, drink and desires. In the same way, even the smell which emanates from the mouth of a fasting person and which is so disliked by others becomes more beloved to Allāh *ta'ālā* than the fragrance of musk.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said:

وَحَلْوُفٌ فِيمَ الصَّائِمِ أَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ رِيحِ الْمِسْكِ

The smell which emanates from the mouth of a fasting person is more beloved in the sight of Allāh ta'ālā than the fragrance of musk.

This is similar to *jihād* in the cause of Allāh *ta'ālā* which is most beloved in His sight. Consequently, even the excreta and urine of the *mujāhid's* horse has

great value in Allāh's sight. A Hadith states that on the day of Resurrection everything [used by a mujāhid] will be placed on the scales and weighed, and he will be rewarded for it. This is because due to one action, the one who carried out the action is also accepted and valued. Then when he is accepted, everything attached to him will also be valued. In other words, anything which has the slightest relationship with him is accepted.

This is why I say that the path is very easy. There is no need for too much of striving. I ask you to just put salāh and fasting in order. In other words, perform salāh at its appointed time, and keep fast after believing it to be an order of Allāh *ta'ālā*. During these days [of Ramadān], abstain from food, drink, desires, and all sins whether minor or major. Become obedient to the orders of Allāh *ta'ālā*. You will then see the immense enjoyment which you will experience, and how much you will be honoured by Allāh *ta'ālā*.

The Ahlullāh visually observe how much proximity to Allāh *ta'ālā* they are blessed with, and how much their hearts become purified through fasting.

We make du'ā' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to inspire us to keep fast together with its etiquette and prerequisites. Āmīn.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Al-hamdulillāh – all thanks are due solely to Allāh *ta'ālā* for having enabled me to complete the English translation of this blessed and inspiring book. I make an earnest du'a' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to accept this translation, and to make it a means for my salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ وَثُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

As with all human endeavours, there are bound to be errors, mistakes and slip-ups in the translation. I humbly request the reader to inform me of them so that these could be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions will be highly appreciated. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

Was salām

Mahomed Mahomedy

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